

Physical Geographer: Regions of Texas

Adventure Description:

In this adventure, you will think like a physical geographer and create a map of a region of Texas that leads to buried treasure.

Activity

Step 1: Background Information on Physical Geography and Texas (5 minutes)

- Show [Video: The Regions of Texas](#).
- Explain to students that there are four geographic regions in Texas. Each region in Texas has unique features that make it different from the others. Show [Handout: Regions of Texas](#).
- As a class, identify what region of Texas students live in. If you have time, you can also ask students about which other regions they have visited. Students can compare and contrast their experiences in different regions.
- Ask students why it is important for a physical geographer to study different regions of a state (e.g. to learn about different geographic features in a state, to understand how landforms were created to form the surface of an area, to learn about water distributions and to study patterns in climate, such as rainfall, drought or natural disasters and how climate impacts the land).

Step 2: Activity Set Up (5 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will create a map of a region in Texas. Then, they will choose a place on their map where a secret treasure is hidden. They will write a list of hints so that another student will know where the treasure is hidden. Afterwards, another student will guess where the treasure is hidden.
- Provide students with [Handout: Steps to Create a Map](#), [Handout: Regions of Texas Sources](#) and art supplies (optional). As a class, walk through the steps.
- Teacher note: students can work individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

Step 3: Learning about Regions of Texas (10+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will first learn about different regions in Texas. Then, they will select a region that they want to create a map of. Have students complete steps 1-3 on the handout.
- As students are working, ask the following:
 - What geographic features best describe the state of Texas?
 - What is the importance of a physical map in understanding a place?
 - What geographic features of Texas were you surprised to learn about?

Step 4: Create a Map Key and Draw out Map (20+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will now create a map of their region with a key. Discuss reasons why it is important for maps to have a key (e.g., allows landforms to be represented simply, allows someone to understand what the map is showing, etc.)
- Students should use the list of landforms they created to help them decide what they need to draw in their key.
- When students finish creating their key, they should cut it out and keep it on their desk. They will glue this key onto their map after they draw it out.

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- Have students complete steps 4 and 5 on the handout. Students can draw their maps in the space provided, or can use large sheet of poster board to draw their map.

Step 4: Create Instructions for Hidden Treasure (10+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will now create instructions for someone else to identify where the secret treasure is located on their map.
- As students are working, ask them the following:
 - How can your clues help someone find your treasure without giving too much away?
 - What information about your region can you use to guide someone looking for your treasure?
 - Can anyone use your clues to find your treasure, or would they need to have an understanding of Texas regions?
- Have students complete step 6 on the handout. When they finish writing out their instructions, have them cut out the box.

Step 5: Switching Maps with Another Student (5-10 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will now switch maps with another student. Have each student pair up and switch maps and hidden treasure instructions with their partner.
- Provide students with [Handout: Looking for Treasure](#) and read through the instructions.
- Explain that each student will have to figure out two things: (1) what region of Texas the map is showing and (2) where the treasure is located on the map based on the directions provided.
- Instruct students to read through the clues they were given. First, have students guess which region of Texas is being shown. Students should record their guess on the handout and check it with their partner.
- Once both partners have correctly guessed the region of Texas they are looking at, they should try to figure out where in the region the treasure is buried.
- Once students think they have found the treasure, have them write their guess on the handout and check with the map creator. If students were wrong, they can try again.

Step 6: Concluding Discussion (5 minutes)

- Have a class discussion about students' experience following clues to buried treasure. Ask students the following:
 - Where you able to locate the treasure, based on the clues you were given? If not, what extra information did you need?
 - What landforms or characteristics helped you identify your region?
- Have a concluding discussion about the importance of physical landmarks as a way of finding locations.
 - Why might physical landmark not always work in finding a place? (e.g., physical landmarks can change, disappear).

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Materials List

Provided online:

- Video: The Regions of Texas
- Show Handout: Regions of Texas
- Handout: Regions of Texas Sources
- Handout: Steps to Create a Map
- Handout: Looking for Treasure

Not Provided Online:

- Art Supplies
- Poster Board (optional)

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